

THE NEW YORK ARCHITECT

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THE ALLIED FINE ARTS.

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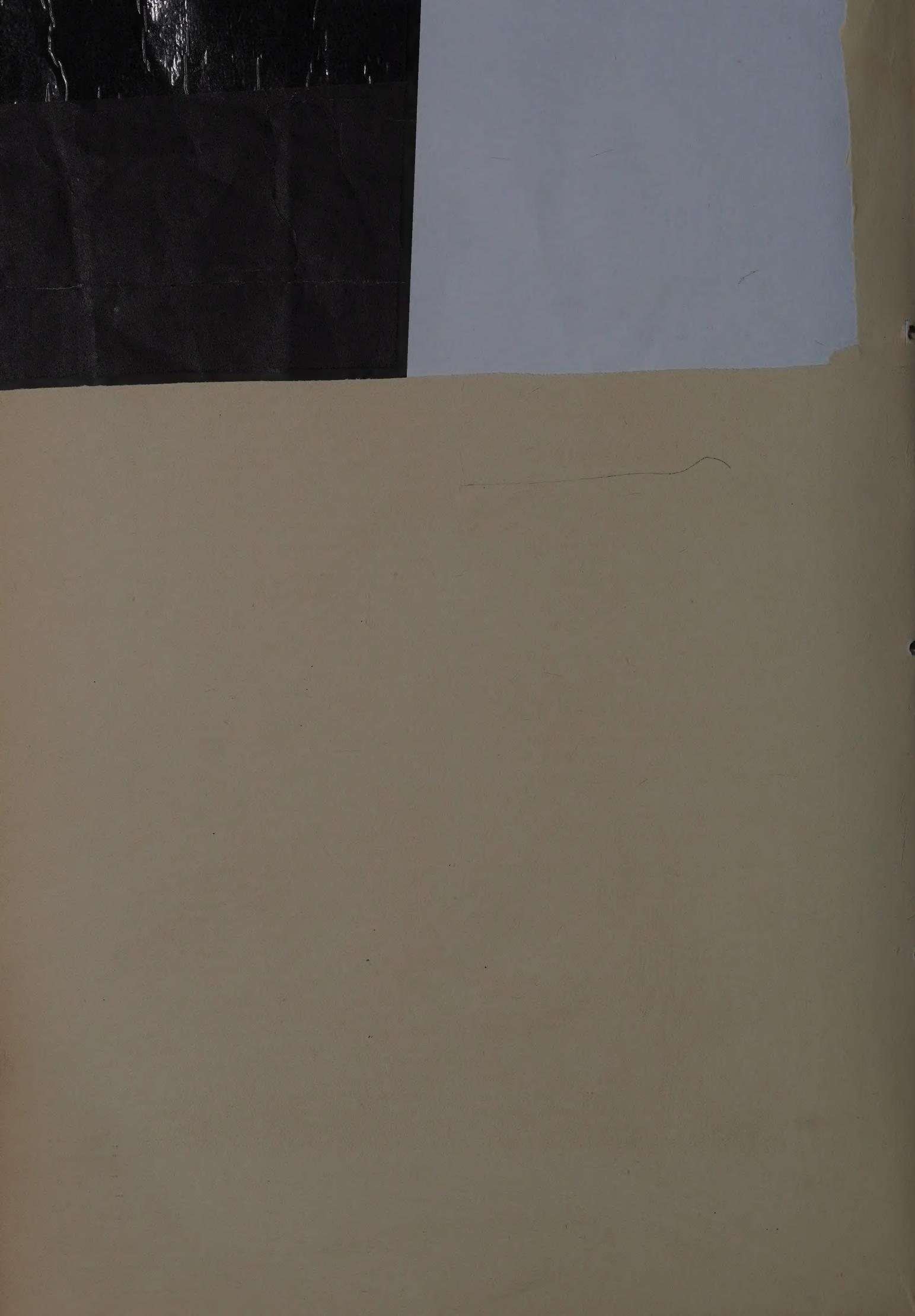
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DONN BARBER, Editor

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE
AMERICAN ARTISAN
THE RECENT MOVEMENT OF THE FIFTH AVENUE
ASSOCIATION TOWARD GUIDING
ARCHITECTURE ON THAT FAMOUS THOROUGHFARE
Robert Grier Cooke

DECORATIVE WORK IN THE HUDSON
COUNTY COURT HOUSE

NOTES FOR ARCHITECTS.

Illustrations in Photogravure.

The new Hudson County Court House, located on the Heights in Jersey City, has just been opened for occupancy and only a few exterior and interior details are necessary to make it a complete whole.

Situated on the south end of a keystone-shaped plot of ground in a section of Jersey City Heights which bids fair to become the centre of its business life, the new building can be reached conveniently from all sections of the county.

The general style of the architecture is Modern Renaissance. The exterior is plain, almost devoid of ornamentation, but gives an impression of dignity. The material is granite.

The plan of the interior is developed from a

rotunda, which is surrounded by massive columns supporting the arches above. The flooring is of marble, and the first floor of the rotunda is laid up in courses in marble of a warm pearl-gray with rubbed finish, giving a restful gray tone against which the lighting effects stand out with sufficient brilliance and with no glare. This rubbed finish is followed in the case of four-cornered piers which carry the four large arches above the third floor level. Extending from the second floor to the entablature above are eight columns of polished green Cipollina marble, two columns below each arch. Heavy marble rails of unusual design are erected at the third floor level, making the floor between the second and third stories a mezzanine gallery. The marbles used throughout the rotunda scheme for wainscoting and casings are gray in color and highly polished.

One of the interesting features of the Court House is the interior decorative work which was all done under the supervision of F. D. Millet, who associated with himself E. C. Blashfield, Kenyon Cox, C. Y. Turner and Howard Pyle.

One of the attractive rooms in the court house is the Freeholders' Room, where are five mural paintings by Howard Pyle. The room is done in wood, with black and gold German marble in the entrance, the tones of the room making a rich setting for the work of Mr. Pyle.

The treatment of the various court rooms is interesting in that no two are treated in the same way and each has a distinct individuality. The Criminal Court is in the Greek style with twenty polished marble pilasters. The wainscoting between them is in marble of pearl gray tone. The disks under the lights in this room were carved from solid pieces of alabaster, which adds to the severe dignity and richness of this court room. The Supreme Court Room is in Greek style, with polished marble columns. Court A is done in East India mahogany in the Modern Renaissance, Court B in Italian Renaissance with Swiss Cipollina pilasters and wainscoting of statuary marble. The County Court is in Roman style with pilasters of a Canadian marble of a gray and white tone that is particularly effective. The furnishings throughout are rich and appropriate, having been made from special designs.

One of the provisions of the architect, which will be particularly appreciated by lawyers and their clients, is the large Law Library situated on the mezzanine floor. It is thirty-two by

THE NEW YORK ARCHITECT

forty feet, finished in dark Flemish oak, shut in by sound-proof doors and furnished with comfortable chairs and a long table where lawyers may study their cases in absolute quiet and seclusion. A retiring room, opening off from the library, is planned for the reception of cli-



DETAIL OF MAIN ENTRANCE
HUDSON COUNTY COURT HOUSE

ents, where they may meet their attorneys. A feature of the library is the fact that there are few book cases in the room itself, the books being provided for by two large steel-lined cases opening out of the room and having a capacity of several thousand volumes.

The architect is Hugh Roberts, who has been for a number of years at the head of the New Jersey State Board of Architects.



THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE AMERICAN ARTISAN

A prominent New York architect, who is known to be an ardent admirer of old-world works of art, recently made the statement to one of our staff members that, "Americans don't have to go abroad for their art any more. Granted," he said, "that Europe still excels in certain branches of craftsmanship, including interior decoration, which is still in its infancy in this country, it is, nevertheless, true that, although architects have been in the habit of calling on European artists for their bronze, marble, glass and other accessories for artistic building of all kinds, we now have in this country artists in all these lines of work who cannot be excelled by anything that the old world has to offer."

Few architects, interested though they might be, would have time to visit the various prominent factories and studios where such work is turned out, and it has, therefore, occurred to us that it might be of interest to our readers to have us visit some of these places of interest for

them and describe as well as is possible by word and picture the splendid things that are being done in this country in bronze, iron, marble and glass. The places to which we shall make these "little journeys" will be determined by the consensus of opinion among the best-known members of the architectural profession as to whom they consider the leader in his particular line of work, leadership depending in each case upon the man's artistic abilities and his freedom from commercialism in the production of his work.

A MARBLE ARTIST AND HIS WORK.

Marble has been in all ages synonymous with luxury in building. The palaces of the kings and nobles in ancient times were of marble and later the wealthy aristocrats built their villas of the same noble material which was found in great plenty in Greece, Italy, Rome and other Trans-Atlantic countries. It was not extensively used in this country until our enormous wealth began to grow and finally centralize in the hands of a comparatively large number of men and women who then began to build in various sections of the United States magnificent homes which called for marble for exterior and interior use. Great public buildings were also built of this material. Then, lately, with the advent of fireproof construction for commercial buildings of all kinds, the demand for marble has been increased until architects have been obliged to scour the native soil for stone rather than to waste time and money in having it transported over seas. A number of States have been found to produce marble as really beautiful and durable and in as apparently inexhaustable quantities as the quarries of the old world. Vermont, Maine, Canada, and Maryland have contributed some remarkable specimens, and new fields are being discovered every year.

Across the Hudson River on the Jersey shore, at a point almost opposite Grant's Tomb, are the marble works of a man who has numbered among his patrons and warm friends the late Richard Morris Hunt and the late Stanford White. A trip across the ferry brings the visitor to the large works where the outlook is such as would delight the heart of any artist. On one side green lawns and trees and on the other the Hudson River. In a cheery, sunny workroom facing the visitor as he enters are several exquisitely chiselled pieces of marble—a head, a portrait bust, an architectural subject, a monument and, among others, a remarkably lifelike relief of Richard Morris Hunt. The owner of this splendid plant is a genial host who counts it a pleasure to conduct visitors through the workshops of which he is justly proud. Every workman has a light, clean, comfortable place to work and one can readily see that each man is an expert in his own particular branch of the work. They are

THE NEW YORK ARCHITECT

not merely stone-cutters carrying out certain typewritten instructions under a foreman's direction; each man is an artist artisan who, while he has, of course, the architect's drawing before him as a guide, very evidently is putting his best effort into the execution of the architect's thought behind the pencilled lines.

For general work the tooling is done with delicate instruments that are operated by machinery cleverly guided by these expert hands, the finer touches being, of course, done by hand. It is wonderful to watch scroll work developing under their deft manipulation. A piece of marble designed for an entrance was being executed from the architect's design with lights and shades that only an artist could give.

The first stage of the work is to make the working model from which the stone is to be copied. Each man assigned to a special piece of work has his model before him. After selecting his piece of stone (which is done with the greatest care), he chisels it into the proper shape and works out the rough design, after which the finer touches are added and finally the whole work is polished in a machine, which gives the stone the highest kind of glaze.

One of the most interesting parts of the work is the preparation of the stone for the carving. Ton upon ton of marble from both foreign and domestic quarries lies outside in the yards ready to be hoisted on the traveling crane into the workroom, but first it is placed in the cutting machines where it is held tightly while saw-like projections, through which sand and water constantly run, produce sufficient friction to cut through the stone as cleanly as though it were done with a knife-blade. This operation takes ten days and the pieces thus cut are then taken into the workshops and put into other machines which are gauged to cut them into any required size or shape. This cutting is so absolutely perfect that the edge of the piece cut away is almost as smooth as though it were polished. Sand and water are employed to do almost all the work in cutting and polishing marble, and it seems impossible to believe that these simple mediums can be so effectively used.

In another part of the plant mosaic work of the finest kind is done, for flooring, particularly. This work is all done by hand with the greatest care for exactness and perfection of color in the different pieces selected.

Among the fine pieces of finished work seen at this plant was a remarkable marble mantel designed by a prominent architect, and made at this plant for a wealthy resident of New York. It is exquisite in color and of the Italian Renaissance style, the carving certainly equal to the best imported mantels that it could possibly be compared with. Another interesting piece of finished work was a monument ordered by a prominent New York architect for his fam-

ily lot. In this case the owner had given the artist free rein in his execution of the suggested design, with the result that the most charming evidence of hand work was to be seen in the rough strokes that made the design stand out as only such hand work could. Another finished piece of extraordinary beauty was a roughly hewn piece of white marble cut to represent a cliff up which the bronze figure of a man was climbing, hammer in hand as though testing the rock. This, our host explained, was a portrait figure of a famous foreign marble man who is known to be an expert in testing rock for evidences of marble. The conception was striking and the bronze figure, we were assured, was a perfect portrait of the man.

Of the work in progress, one of the interesting pieces was a curved piece of marble intended as part of a stair rail, a remarkable piece of execution; another was a spandrel on which a design of child-figures in high relief was being worked out.

The final and lasting impression, after spending an hour or two in this inspiring place, is not so much of the actual detail of the work that is going on, as of the general atmosphere and spirit that is back of it all. No trouble is too great to have the work executed under the architect's direction an absolutely artistic product. The atmosphere of commercialism is astonishingly lacking. It is said that in carrying out a large contract for Stanford White in one of the well-known Fifth avenue residences of New York, this very marble artist refused to put in piece after piece of his own work because it did not quite suit him, and he was so thoroughly in harmony with Mr. White's ideals that the finished product is said to be one of the finest in the country. In other words, this man, who is considered by most of the well-known architects to be the finest marble artist in this country, has gained his reputation, it is very evident, by putting aside all thought of the commercial end of it and presenting to the architect who patronizes him his experience, his good taste in selection of stone, his knowledge of the finest qualities in various marbles and his own time and thought, together with the expert services of his workmen, and he never ceases to co-operate with the architect until the work has been pronounced completed and satisfactory.

Many young draftsmen from the various New York architects' offices may be found almost any morning going through the works to get, as one of them expressed it, "inspiration from the very atmosphere of the place." You leave the plant feeling that you have spent the time in the workshop of a master artist of his craft and you go back across the ferry to the city feeling an uplift and with a little more faith in the belief that art has not entirely died out of business.

THE NEW YORK ARCHITECT

THE RECENT MOVEMENT OF THE FIFTH AVENUE ASSOCIATION TOWARD GUIDING ARCHITECTURE ON THAT FAMOUS THOROUGHFARE

It has been the ambition of the Fifth Avenue Association, which voices the sentiments of the residents, property owners and merchants of all that great section of Manhattan reaching from Washington Square far up on the east side of Central Park, to make the thoroughfare from which it takes its name, the leading avenue in the world.

Fifth Avenue is a street which already has a certain majesty in its building outlines, taken as a whole, and yet, naturally, with no united effort in the past on the part of those who should have had its interests most at heart, there is room for vast improvement in the character and trend of its architecture. With the tremendous building changes which have taken place in the Fifth Avenue section in recent years and with those which are projected for the future, there seems now to be a real opportunity for the adoption of some comprehensive plan for influencing the development of its architecture along lines of beauty, order and harmony. This may be accomplished through legislative action, if that seems feasible, or it may be brought about through the exercise of popular sentiment, which, after all, is in most cases the most powerful factor in accomplishing essential reforms.

With such a movement in view, and after considerable correspondence with the various societies of New York interested in work of this nature, Arnold W. Brunner, President of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects, recently appointed a committee of architects to investigate the subject and to confer with and to report their conclusions to the Fifth Avenue Association. On this committee were named William M. Kendall, of Messrs. McKim, Mead & White, and John M. Carrere, of Messrs. Carrere & Hastings, while Mr. Brunner consented to serve as its third member.

In taking this initial step in the movement for better architecture on Fifth Avenue it was considered best to limit this investigating or deliberative committee to architects and to consider the subject purely from an architectural viewpoint. Later on, it might be considered desirable to unite this committee with a similarly constituted committee of laymen, representing the business and residential interests of the district and the avenue.

In connection with the creation of this committee of architects, I have been in communication with the National Academy of Design, the National Sculpture Society, the Municipal Art Society and the Society of Beaux Arts Ar-

chitects, which have expressed their deepest interest and sympathy with the project in hand. The matter has been brought before the governing bodies of these various associations and they have offered their services to assist the movement in any way possible.

Within a very short time the architects forming the committee will begin to hold meetings. They will discuss the entire subject and make such recommendations as may seem to them best. Very recently Mr. Carrere gave public expression to his views as to the possibilities of the movement, from an architectural viewpoint, and the public discussion of his views together with the careful and sympathetic consideration which the most influential daily papers are giving the matter, encourages the belief that the steps now being taken will lead to some practical plan for betterments along the line indicated. As Mr. Carrere has said, "There is no question that, without establishing any arbitrary set of rules or restrictions and without interfering with vested rights or personal prerogatives, we could gradually arrive at a consensus of opinion on certain fundamental features of the problem."

Without any desire to forestall the opinions of the distinguished members of the committee, but with a specific wish to follow out Mr. Carrere's idea and to arrive at a consensus of the opinions of all concerned and perhaps to aid the committee in the formation of its judgment with practical suggestions from laymen, I have begun to collect the ideas of representative bankers, property owners, merchants, hotel men and others who have a right to be heard on a matter so vitally affecting their various interests.

These men very naturally offer a variety of opinions as to the best way to approach the regulation or direction of future Fifth Avenue architecture, but it is only fair to say that at this time the ideas presented are not so developed that I can give them very fully in this article.

There is a rather general agreement among the business men and other public-spirited citizens who have expressed opinions on the subject that any plan to influence or guide Fifth Avenue building operations through legislation probably would be doomed to failure. This is in accordance with the ideas expressed by Mr. Carrere.

"I am convinced," said he, "that no ordinances, laws or other restrictive or compulsory methods would be successful, but I do believe that all that is necessary in this instance is to

THE NEW YORK ARCHITECT

bring the matter to the attention of the public in some such suggestive form that will be helpful and that will tend toward the ultimate accomplishment of the purpose in mind by interesting the owners and architects and giving them some kind of an incentive and a program."

Among the most emphatic in their declarations that it would be a mistake to try to bring about results through legislation are an eminent jurist and a prominent hotel man. The former—Justice Gerard—states that he is heartily in favor of the steps that have been taken toward the adoption of some uniform plan for architectural betterments in Fifth Avenue, and he unqualifiedly endorses the view of Mr. Carrere—that the best way to attain the purposes sought is through approaching the property owners themselves. He has complete confidence in the ability of the committee of architects to solve the problem satisfactorily and is convinced that as soon as their report is made they will receive hearty support from the public.

The hotel man, Mr. R. M. Haan, of the St. Regis, who spends much of his time in Europe and hence enjoys admirable facilities for comparing the architecture of our finest buildings with that of the most famous avenues and thoroughfares of Continental cities, is equally opposed to any effort to control or guide Fifth Avenue building development through legislation.

"Fifth Avenue is the most beautiful avenue in the world, without any exception," he said. "I was more than ever impressed with it as I came in this time from Europe. It is impressive, dignified, beautiful, and it has recently become alive with business. I think that Fifth Avenue should be made the example for the other great business thoroughfares of the world to pattern by, and this can only be done by public sentiment. If the architects named on the committee will lay out a general plan, I am very sure that public-spirited citizens will be persuaded to cooperate with them. I do not think, however, that the desired end can be reached through legislation.

"My idea would be for a committee of laymen and architects to make it their business to call upon property owners who had been reported as planning to build and also on their proposed architects and, in friendly conference, talk over the possibility of having the building in view as artistic and as conformable to the existing nearby architecture as possible. This could be done without offense and other property owners would soon see by the example set that it does not cost any more to make a practical thing beautiful than to make it ugly."

A still further reason why, in the opinion of Mr. Haan and of others also, business men and property owners themselves should be ready to listen to any and all suggestions designed to

make their buildings more attractive is to be found in their self-interest. With the tremendous migration of retail business establishments of the highest class to the avenue and its vicinity and the location there of the largest and finest hotels and other notable buildings, the thoroughfare is becoming daily more and more of a favorite promenade for both strangers and the best classes of residents of New York, and this makes it of vital importance to every merchant or owner of a business building to do his part to keep up the street's high standard and to make it still more beautiful.

Much the same idea is expressed by the owner of one of the largest plots of property in Fifth Avenue, Mr. J. H. Burton, who has given much thought to the future development of the thoroughfare and of the district generally. He does not believe it would even be necessary to approach property owners who might be about to build in Fifth Avenue. He feels sure that the value of the property in the avenue is so enormous that every property owner must of necessity feel it incumbent upon him to build the kind of building that would be a credit to himself as well as to Fifth Avenue. "It is," to quote the words of this owner, "largely a matter for the architect to decide, for if I, or any other property owner on Fifth Avenue, were to put up a building I would naturally select the best architect I could find, and I would undoubtedly leave to his experience and judgment the architectural features of the building."

Not the least interesting, although perhaps the most radical, views as to the most feasible way of directing Fifth Avenue's future development along building lines are those set forth by a well-known photographer, whose clientele is drawn largely from upper Fifth Avenue residences and whose ideas are artistic as well as practical. While the buildings in Fifth Avenue, in his opinion, should not be absolutely uniform in height, there should be a certain degree of uniformity and certainly complete harmony in general architectural style, height, etc.

Disagreeing with Mr. Carrere and others already quoted, he is strongly of the opinion that the only way to bring about the desired result of securing a beautiful Fifth Avenue is by means of legislation. "Every man who is a property owner," he argues, "is naturally going to resent any interference with the way in which he shall build when he gets ready to do so, and yet there should be just as strict regulations for building as those which govern traffic, in order that the community as a whole shall receive the greatest good." Moral suasion, in this layman's opinion, would be effective only as a means of securing the desired legislation.

While having no direct bearing on the main problem under consideration, nevertheless a

THE NEW YORK ARCHITECT

number of business men, property owners and others unite in condemning in unmeasured terms a building abuse now all too common on Fifth Avenue, and one which of late has done much to mar the general beauty and attractiveness of the street. This is the practice of many builders of obstructing the sidewalk and large portions of the pavement while carrying on the work of erecting large buildings.

"That this littering up and obstruction of the sidewalk and street are not necessary," declared one Fifth Avenue business man who is particularly severe in his strictures on the building regulations which make such abuses possible, "is proved by the way the Marcus building was put up. There the entire work of construction was carried on without the sidewalk being obstructed at any time and without any interference with traffic." Those who have expressed any opinion at all about this nuisance unite in declaring it to be wholly unnecessary and demand that builders be compelled by law to give up the practice. Very likely the Fifth Avenue Association will shortly take active steps to effect a reform in this matter.

The representative of a well-known institution which makes building loans on rather a large scale told me that it was a great satisfaction to him to know that they were able to exercise quite an influence on the architecture of the structures for the building of which they provided money. This institution has its own architect, who passes upon every detail as submitted by the architects for the building to be erected. Then an inspector, representing the lender, watches the progress of the work from day to day very closely. This affords another example of the way in which influence can be powerfully exerted to at least set good examples.

The suggestion has been made that prizes be offered to owners, and I have had a little opportunity to take this up with several people whose opinion is worth having. They said that they thought these prizes should consist of medals made in the very best way by people of the highest reputation. In many ways, it would seem, therefore, can we go toward the desired goal.

We shall, with great interest, await the report of the Committee of Architects:

ROBERT GRIER COOKE.



THE DECORATIVE WORK IN THE HUDSON COUNTY COURT HOUSE.

The decorative work in the New Hudson County Court House is remarkable for the fact that it combines the talents of five of the best-known interior decorators in this country. The

entire scheme was placed by the architect in the hands of Frank D. Millet, who associated with himself E. C. Blashfield, Kenyon Cox, C. Y. Turner and Howard Pyle.

Mr. Millet tells us that when the commission was first given to him he mapped out a general scheme dividing the work among his associates so that each man who did a part of it should have assigned to him the kind of work that he was specially interested in. In this way the work has been correlated and the complete decorative scheme is apparent although Mr. Millet explained that the original plan could not be carried out in all its details owing to certain architectural features which naturally had to be met.

The general plan is historic. The Freeholders' Room contains the work of Howard Pyle, which consists of five mural paintings,



DETAIL OF PENDENTIVE, WITH BLASHFIELD DECORATION

three large pictures and two smaller single figure pictures. The first represents the "Coming of the English," the second, the "Coming of the Dutch," the third, the "First Settlement on Manhattan Island," and the two smaller figures represent a Dutch and English soldier standing guard.

Mr. Blashfield's work is seen in the dome and again in four pendentives between the arches of the third floor, the subjects of which are winged figures of Fame, which he has represented in four attitudes bearing in one hand a trumpet and in the other a shield. On the shields in cameo are: the head of Alexander Hamilton, who gave his best talents to the development of New Jersey's judicial system; of John Stevens, the founder of the famous Hoboken family and a pioneer in industrial and commercial fields; of Abraham Zabriskie, formerly Chancellor and a distinguished lawyer, and of Richard Varick, an early land owner

THE NEW YORK ARCHITECT

and founder of a family famous in the history of Jersey City.

Mr. Cox's work is the decoration of the corridor corners consisting of eight small lunettes. The lunettes are gilded and decorated with scroll work in the style of the Italian Renaissance, the central motive of each lunette being a single figure composition treated as a cameo, the figure in white on a black background. These symbolical figures represent Justice, Uprightness, Courage, Moderation, Wisdom and Learning, and Liberty and Law.

For himself Mr. Millet reserved two lunettes on the top floor and two others on the same floor for Mr. Turner's work. The subjects for these have just been chosen by Mr. Millet. He will probably paint scenes representing the early seventeenth century period of Jersey's history, while Mr. Turner's subjects will be taken from the Revolutionary period. These lunettes will not be in place before next Spring.

For the mezzanine corridor Mr. Millet has planned twelve medallions of classic figures, which the sketches show to be exceedingly graceful and in harmony with their architectural surroundings.

One of the most interesting details of the decorative work is the plan which Mr. Millet has outlined for the decoration of the second-story corridor. This will be done by Mr. Millet himself and, as he explained to us, his plan for the decorative work here was to represent a chronological history of important events in Jersey from its earliest beginning to the present day. These subjects will be painted in a series

of panels running entirely around the corridor. "My idea," said Mr. Millet, "in putting them in the spaces in the second floor corridor carries out my belief that in decorating a court house the decorations should be in the main building and not in the court rooms, which I believe should always be severely simple. The public will naturally wander through these corridors, and my plan is to have them come upon these paintings as surprises."

The sketches for these are now in preparation and one of them, which we had the pleasure of seeing, promises a series of unusual interest from an historic as well as a decorative standpoint. The general tone will be gray to harmonize with the gray and black marble which is used throughout this part of the building. The subjects follow: The "Half-Moon," the "First Church," the "First Street Car and Old Windmill," the "First Railway," the "Phoenix," the "First Ferryboat," the "Weehawken" (Monitor), "Jersey City Water Front," "New York Water Front," "Modern Ferryboat," the "Court House," the "Clermont."

From this list it will be seen that Mr. Millet intends to have this series of pictures a permanent record of Jersey past and present, and while the modern pictures may not seem to have any particular value at the present day, Mr. Millet explained that perhaps a quarter of a century hence people would be both curious and interested to see the great change that will then have taken place between what we now consider modern methods and what will then be in force.



